



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ERRORS IN BEAUCHAMPS' *RECHERCHES SUR LES THÉÂTRES DE FRANCE*

Despite the fact that Faguet seriously compromised the trustworthiness of his *Tragédie française au XVII^e siècle* by the confidence he placed in the fictions of Mouhy's *Journal du théâtre français*, critics have not ceased to trust eighteenth-century works devoted to the history of the French stage. Even those who are wary of accepting a single date are apt to follow Beauchamps when he gives not only the date found on the title-page of a play, but also the dates of the *privilege* and *achevé d'imprimer*. An entry that reads "L'Argenis . . . in-8°. 1636. la veuve Bessin, achevée d'imprimer le 15. juin, priv. du 18. Avril"¹ certainly inspires confidence until one happens to consult the original edition of the play and learns that Beauchamps has set down 1636 for 1631. Then one asks whether such mistakes are common and to what extent this writer may be trusted.

To answer this question I compared the dates given by Beauchamps for 119 plays with those of the original editions and found him in error with regard to 19 plays or about 16 per cent. of the cases. Usually the mistakes are slight. Beauchamps gives the wrong day,² or the wrong month,³ occasionally the wrong year.⁴ When one consults the plays cited, one can see in some cases the source of his error. The *privilege* to print Guérin de Bouscal's *Suite de la Mort de César* was given on July 23, "1637 et de nostre règne le vingt-septième," a contradiction, for, as Louis XIII

¹ *Recherches sur les théâtres de France*, Paris, Prault, 1735, II, 79.

² *Argénis et Poliarque*, *privilege*, Feb. 23 for 25; *Nitocris*, *priv.*, Nov. 20 for 10; *Victime d'Etat*, *priv.*, May 7 for 17; *Généreuse Allemande*, *achevé d'imprimer*, Nov. 18 for 8; Durval, *Panthée*, *ach.*, Feb. 22 for 12; *Persélide*, *ach.*, Aug. 13 for Aug. 1; *Inceste supposé*, *ach.*, Dec. 30 for 31; *Thémistocle*, *ach.*, March 10 for 20; *Anaxandre*, *ach.*, March 21 for 26.

³ *Don Quixote*, *priv.*, March for May; *Scévole*, *ach.*, June for January.

⁴ *Suite de la Mort de César*, *priv.*, 1637 for 1636; *Mort de Mithridate*, *ach.*, 1637 for 1636; Puget de la Serre, *Martire de Sainte Catherine*, *priv.* and *ach.*, 1642 for 1643; Desmaretz, *Rowane*, *priv.*, May 13, 1647 for March 14, 1639, *ach.*, April 25, 1647 for the latter part of 1640; *Argénis*, *priv.* and *ach.*, 1636 for 1631; *Lysandre et Caliste*, *priv.* and *ach.*, July 2 and Aug. 5, 1636, for July 20 and Aug. 5, 1632; *Folies de Cardénio*, *priv.*, 1625 for 1629; Monléon, *Thyeste*, 1633 for 1638.

became king in May, 1610, the month of July, 1636, not 1637, fell in the twenty-seventh year of his reign. Moreover this *priviège* was transferred to Quinet on Jan. 16, 1637 and the *achevé d'imprimer* is dated Feb. 20 of the same year. Evidently the misprint lies in the first date, which contradicts the other three. If it is changed to 1636, there is no difficulty. The play is then seen to have preceded the *Cid* and hence to have more importance than if it had first appeared in 1637. Again, after dating Desmaretz's *Roxane* 1640, Beauchamps gives the *priviège* and *achevé d'imprimer* as of May 13 and April 25, 1647, confusing this play with the *Mort de Roxane* by "J. M. S.," whose *priviège* and *achevé d'imprimer* date from May 13, 1647 and April 25, 1648. As a matter of fact, the *priviège* of Desmaretz's *Roxane* was granted March 14, 1639. The play must have been printed between June 12, 1640, the day when the *priviège* was transferred to another publisher, and the end of the year.

Other mistakes are less obvious. I have referred to Du Ryer's *Argénis*, dated 1636 instead of 1631. Similar errors are found in the case of his *Lysandre et Caliste*, dated 1636 for 1632 and of Pichou's *Folies de Cardénio*, dated Aug. 20, 1625, instead of Aug. 20, 1629. Two leading authorities, Rigal⁵ and Dannheisser,⁶ have accepted the erroneous date for the latter play and thus given it an undue importance in the development of the French drama. Beauchamps is, however, less to blame here than elsewhere. He evidently got the date from an edition of the play printed by Targa at Paris in 1633 which gives Aug. 20, 1625 as the date of the *priviège*. He should have noticed that the document cited is not the *priviège* itself, but only an "extrait" from it. Had he examined the original edition, he would have found only the date Aug. 20, 1629.⁷

The dating of Monléon's *Thyeste* is less excusable. Beauchamps writes "in -4°. 1633. Paris, Guillemot, achevée d'imprimer le 9 août, priv. du 6." Copies in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Widener Library of Harvard University, and the Library of the Comédie Française give exactly the same days of the same months,

⁵ In Petit de Julleville's *Hi toir de la langue et de la littérature française*, IV, 226.

⁶ "Zur Geschichte der Einheiten in Frankreich," *ZfSL*. 1892, p. 66.

⁷ This is shown by a copy at the Bibliothèque Nationale examined for me by Dr. R. C. Williams, and by another in my possession.

but the year 1638.⁸ The mistake is worth noticing, for if the play had been printed in 1633, it would appear to be the first of a group of seventeenth-century plays based on Seneca that includes Corneille's *Médée* and Rotrou's *Hercule mourant*. Moreover the play shows remarkable unity for the period, more than we find in the *Cid*, as much as is shown by Mairet's *Sophonisbe*, so that it might easily be considered to have more right than the latter to the title of the first French classical tragedy, for it is no mere adaptation of Seneca. In half the play the dramatization of the legend differs decidedly from Seneca's and Monléon improves upon his model in the use he makes of the queen and her children. But first published as it was in 1638, after Mairet, Corneille, Scudéry, Du Ryer, La Calprenède, Bensérade had produced classical tragedies, it possesses little importance, except as an essay in the horrible and in the use of children on the stage, neither of which characteristics was to find many imitators in the seventeenth century.

Beauchamps's error has been very generally followed. The frères Parfaict (1745) date the play 1633.⁹ The *Bibliothèque du théâtre françois*¹⁰ gives the same date, as does Lérís.¹¹ The

* This date is also given by Maupoint, *Bibliothèque des théâtres*, Paris, Prault, 1733, p. 299, who wrote too early to be influenced by Beauchamps. If the question is asked whether there may have been an edition of 1633 as well as of 1638, it may be answered that no copy of the earlier edition has been found, that the edition of 1638 is not called a second edition, that the only evidence for an edition of 1633 is given by authors who are directly or indirectly copying Beauchamps, and that the latter's date must be intended for 1638 unless we are willing to accept the remarkable coincidence that the *privilege* and *achevé* of this supposed edition were dated Aug. 6 and Aug. 9, 1633, while those of the extant edition are Aug. 6. and Aug. 9, 1638.

⁹ They, of course, do not attempt to give the date of printing, but the earliest date on which they think it had been completed by its author.

¹⁰ Dresden, 1768. The authors of this work undoubtedly had an edition of the play in their hands, for their analysis of it enters into considerable detail and reports facts omitted by the frères Parfaict. Their error in the date can be explained by the fact that the plays owned by the duc de La Vallière, which are analyzed in this work, passed largely into the possession of the Arsenal Library and that the copy of the play found there contains no printed date on the title-page, but one written in ink, 1633, in spite of the fact that the *privilege* and *achevé* contained in the volume are dated 1638. Evidently the date in ink was copied from Beauchamp or the frères Parfaict and gave rise to the blunder of the editors of the *Bibliothèque du théâtre françois*.

¹¹ Edition of Paris, 1763, p. 427.

Anecdotes dramatiques (1775) give 1733, adding a typographical error of their own. Mouhy in his *Abrégé de l'histoire du théâtre françois*, II, 236, sets it down as a quarto of 1633, but elsewhere (I, 464) mentions an edition in octavo of that year and a quarto of 1638. He is evidently copying two authorities and trying to reconcile them. In Germany the error has been widely propagated. Lessing¹² writes, "Ausser diesem hat auch ein gewisser Montleon [*sic*] 1633 einen Thyest drucken lassen." H. Lüst, the only person who has printed a careful study of the play, follows his example.¹³ A. L. Stiefel¹⁴ uses the erroneous date and a piece of faulty reasoning to arrive at a probably correct result with regard to the dating of Rotrou's *Hercule mourant*. F. Jakob in a dissertation on the story of Atreus¹⁵ quotes Lérís to justify this date. Finally one of the principal French authorities in this field, the late Professor Rigal, not only accepts the date, 1633, in the article to which I have referred, but on account of it is obliged to explain at some length why he does not consider *Thyeste* the first French classical tragedy.¹⁶

These examples are sufficiently numerous to show how many errors may come from faith in Beauchamps's dates, even when he gives *privilege* and *achevé d'imprimer*. The plays I have examined are, of course, only a few of those cited in his *Recherches*, but the proportion of error would probably hold for the rest of the work. There is no evidence that he deliberately sought to deceive his readers, but either he or his publisher was so careless that he must always be consulted with caution and no chronological theory can be based on dates given in his book, unless they have been found also in the original editions of the plays.

H. CARRINGTON LANCASTER.

¹² *Sämtliche Schriften*, edition of K. Lachmann, Stuttgart, 1890, VI, 231. The context shows that Lessing is following Lérís.

¹³ *Montleon in seinem Thyeste als Nachahmer Senecas*, Schweinfurt, 1887, page 6.

¹⁴ "Ueber die Chronologie von J. Rotrou's dramatischen Werken," *ZFSL*. 1894, xvi, 29.

¹⁵ *Die Fabel von Atreus und Thyestes in den wichtigsten Tragödien der englischen, französischen und italienischen Literatur*, Naumburg a. S., 1906, pp. 4 and 25.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 252.